

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) Box for a set of electric storage batteries, comprising:

at least two side walls (12, 14) extending parallel and defining between themselves a housing for receiving the batteries,

~~the box being characterized in that~~

the side walls (12, 14) consist consisting of an assembly of stacked modules (16), each module comprising a pair of wall elements (18, 20) mounted opposite each other, wherein,

the pair of wall elements (18, 20) are two horizontally opposed wall elements (18, 20) together forming a floor support for the batteries stored therebetween,

each of the two horizontally opposed wall elements form a floor support for one edge of each battery stored therebetween, and

the two horizontally opposed wall elements are separated from each other by an intervening air space so that the two horizontally opposed wall elements support each battery by opposite base edges of the battery with a base area of the

battery between the opposite edges unsupported and exposed to the intervening air space, and

each floor support is sized and constructed to support batteries that are electric self-propelled vehicle batteries having gas recombination sealed elements and sized for serving as a source of electric motive power for a vehicle.

10. (previously presented) Box according to claim 9, characterized in that each wall element (18, 20) comprises at least one folded edge (24) that defines, jointly with a folded edge of the wall element mounted opposite it, a support for at least one row of batteries, two horizontally opposed folded edges being separated from each other by the intervening air space.

11. (previously presented) Box according to claim 9, characterized in that it also comprises battery retention means (38).

12. (previously presented) Box according to claim 11, characterized in that the retention means comprise a removable rod (38) extending through the folded edges (22, 24) of the stacked wall elements.

13. (previously presented) Box according to claim 9, characterized in that it also comprises two end plates (28, 30), each provided with fixing lugs (32) for the wall elements (18, 20).

14. (previously presented) Box according to claim 13, characterized in that the end plates are provided with openings (34) for the ventilation of the battery elements.

15. (previously presented) Box according to claim 13, characterized in that the end plates are each provided with a handling point (36) for engagement by a lifting appliance.

16. (previously presented) System of boxes for a set of electric storage batteries, characterized in that it consists of an assembly of boxes (10) according to claim 9.

17-22. (cancelled)

23. (new) The box of claim 9, wherein, the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries deliver a voltage of the order of 2 volts.

24. (new) The box of claim 9, wherein, the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries are for a maintenance machine vehicle.

25. (new) The box of claim 9, wherein, each wall element (18, 20) is in the form of a U section with arms (22, 24) pointing inwards into the box toward coplanar arms of another wall element, the arms of each wall

element being spaced apart, by the intervening air space, from the coplanar arms of the another wall element,

the U sections directly stacking on another U section,
and

the lower arm of the each wall element and the lower arm of the another wall element together forming the floor support for the batteries.

26. (new) The box of claim 9, further comprising:

the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries having gas recombination sealed elements, the batteries sized for serving as a source of electric motive power for the vehicle,

each floor support supporting plural of the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries stored therebetween.

27. (new) A box for receiving a set of electric storage batteries providing a power source for an electric self-propelled vehicle, comprising:

two side walls (12, 14) spaced apart by an intervening air space, and extending generally parallel and defining a housing in which batteries are placed, the two side walls not contacting each other,

the side walls comprising an assembly of interchangeable stacked elementary modules (16), each elementary module comprising a pair of wall elements (18, 20) mounted opposite each other,

lower arms (24) of the opposing wall elements (18, 20) together forming a support designed to receive a row of the batteries,

upper arms of the opposing wall elements contacting the lower arms of an adjacent wall element, wherein,

edges of the lower arms of each wall element are separated from each other by the intervening air space so that the edges of the lower arms support each battery by opposite base edges of the battery with a base area of the battery between the opposite edges unsupported and exposed to the intervening air space, and

the edges of each of the lower arms are constructed to support a set of electric storage batteries that provide the power source for electric self-propelled vehicles including maintenance machines, the batteries having gas recombination sealed elements.

28. (new) A box for receiving a set of electric storage batteries providing a power source for an electric self-propelled vehicle including a maintenance machine, the batteries having gas recombination sealed elements, comprising:

two side walls (12, 14) spaced apart by an intervening air space and extending generally parallel and defining between the two side walls a housing in which the batteries are placed,

the side walls comprising an assembly of interchangeable stacked elementary modules (16), each elementary module comprising a pair of wall elements (18, 20) mounted opposite each other in an assembled condition and arranged to provide an overall volume of the box adapted to a number of batteries carried and reduce an amount of unoccupied free space,

lower arms (24) of the opposing wall elements (18, 20) together forming a support designed to receive a row of the batteries, wherein,

edges of the lower arms of each wall element are separated from each other by the intervening air space so that the edges of the lower arms support each battery by opposite base edges of the battery with a base area of the battery between the opposite edges unsupported and exposed to the intervening air space, each side wall being free of contact with the other side wall, and

the edges of each of the lowers arms are constructed to support a set of the electric storage batteries that provide the power source for electric self-propelled vehicles including maintenance machines, the batteries having gas recombination sealed elements.

29. (new) The box of claim 28, further comprising:
two end plates (28, 30) attached to free ends of the side walls (12, 14),

at least one of the two end plates being attached removably for the batteries to be horizontally placed in or removed from each elementary module.

30. (new) The box of claim 29, further comprising:
fixing lugs (32) extending from each end plate, the fixing lugs arranged in pairs with one elementary module (16) attached to each lug.

31. (new) The box of claim 29, wherein,
dimensions of the end plates (28, 30) space the wall elements (18, 20) of each elementary module (16) in such a way that the ends of edges (24) of the wall elements (18, 20) are spaced apart by a distance shorter than the length or width of the batteries.

32. (new) The box of claim 29, further comprising:
ventilation openings (34) in the end plates (28, 30) to allow ventilation of the batteries placed in the box; and
a handling point (36) in an upper part of each end plate designed to engage with a lifting appliance for raising and lowering the box when carrying the batteries.

33. (new) The box of claim 29, further comprising:
a battery retaining element located in each side wall (12, 14) and extending through each wall element (18, 20) of a respective side wall (12, 14), the battery retaining element configured to retain the batteries in a respective elementary module (16).

34. (new) The box of claim 33, wherein,
the battery retaining element is a rod (38) inserted into orifices (40) formed in folded edges (22, 24) of the wall elements, and

the wall elements are in the form of U sections directly stacked one on another, and
upper arms of the opposing wall elements contact the lower arms of an adjacent wall element.